

REMARKS

Applicants acknowledge receipt of the Final Office Action dated 16 August 2010. In that action, the Examiner: 1) rejected claims 1, 16-18, 32-36, 42-47, 49, 52, 53, 58, 59 and 145-147 under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as being anticipated by U.S. Pat. No. 4,319,393 to Pogonowski (“Pogonowski”); 2) objected to claims 6-15, 19-24, 28-31, 50 and 51 as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims; and 3) allowed claims 2-5, 25-27, 37-41, 48, 54-57 and 60-63. Applicants respectfully request reconsideration in view of the present response which directly addresses the 16 August 2010 Final Office Action.

Allowed Claims and Effectively Allowed Claims

Applicants appreciate the allowance of claims 2-5, 25-27, 37-41, 48, 54-57 and 60-63, and the allowability of claims 6-15, 19-24, 28-31, 50 and 51. The remaining claims are discussed below.

35 USC 102 Rejections based on Pogonowski

Applicants’ disclosure shows that the expansion device continuously radially expands and deforms the tubulars while it is axially displaced through the tubulars. See, for example, how the expansion cone 34 continuously radially expands the coupled tubulars while it moves axially within the tubulars in Figures 1d and 1e, Figures 2a and 2b, Figures 3a and 3b, Figures 4a and 4b, and others. Pogonowski, on the other hand, teaches only that the swages 10, 10a, 10b are actuated at axially discrete and set locations to extend the indentation tips 17, 18, 75, 76 for dimple forming (see col. 5, ll. 22-27; col. 6, ll. 44-48). Then, the indentation tips are retracted so that the swage can be raised or lowered, and the indentation tips re-extended at a set axial location for further dimple forming (see col. 5, ll. 30-38; col. 6, ll. 51-60). Thus, the indentation tips of Pogonowski are extended only at set axial locations, and otherwise retracted for axial movement of the swage. Consequently, the tubulars of Pogonowski are not radially expanded and plastically deformed during axial movement of the swage.

Accordingly, Applicants have clarified the claims to reflect this distinction. Specifically, claim 1 is amended to include “displacing an expansion device within and relative to the first

tubular member, the second tubular member and the tubular sleeve” from previous claim 146 (now canceled), and also “radially expanding and plastically deforming the first tubular member and the second tubular member in response to and while displacing the expansion device” in accordance with the distinction noted above. Claims 33, 34, 42-44, and 58 now similarly include “radially expanding and plastically deforming the first tubular member and the second tubular member in response to and while displacing an expansion device through the tubular members.” Claim 147 now includes “moving an expansion device axially through the tubular members and the tubular sleeve to radially expand and plastically deform the tubular members and the tubular sleeve during the axial movement of the expansion device.”

Claims 45 and 46 are amended to be consistent with newly amended claim 1.

Applicants respectfully request withdrawal of the claim rejections and allowance of the claims in view of the noted prior art distinction and accompanying amendments to the claims. All pending claims are now distinguished over Pogonowski and all other art of record.

CONCLUSION

Applicants respectfully request reconsideration, withdrawal of the rejections, and allowance of the pending claims. It is Applicants’ desire that this case be brought to a swift resolution. Therefore, if the Examiner feels that a telephone conference would expedite the resolution of this case, she is respectfully requested to contact the undersigned.

Should any fees have been inadvertently omitted, or if any additional fees are required, or if any fees have been overpaid, please appropriately charge or credit those fees to Deposit Account No. 03-2769 (2725-10105) of Conley Rose, P.C., Houston, Texas and consider this paper a petition for any necessary extension of time.

Respectfully submitted,

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